

The Capital Resource Spring 2008

Why I Keep Coming Back for More

Old home week. That's what it feels like every time I attend an AFP/DC event. Colleagues who have become friends are always there to greet me.

And every time I go to a chapter event, I meet someone new. Her energy and excitement about her organization's mission never fails to motivate and inspire me. And her thoughtful questions about how to make her organization even stronger demonstrate her commitment to a better world. It always reminds me that the future of our dynamic and transformational profession is in great hands.

These days, I spend much of my volunteer time serving on the AFP International Board and chairing their Communications and Marketing Committee. I love working with the wonderful volunteers who give so generously of their time and talents, especially because it gives me the opportunity to meet myriad AFP members from around the globe.

So why do I still take the time to volunteer for the chapter and attend DC events?

Well, there are three reasons. One is that even with more than 20 years under my belt, I always learn something new. From the industry's leading speakers and cutting edge content at the annual Bridge Conference to the always topical Advanced Executive sessions, new approaches to old ideas and new ideas for implementing old approaches are always in healthy supply.

The second reason is competitive analysis. You and I want the latest information about what's going on out there in the world with other organizations. AFP/DC allows me to track the latest trends, find out what my colleagues are doing to address their greatest challenges (like today's pressing staffing shortage and economic recession), and talk with folks about techniques they're using to boost their fundraising results.

The last reason, for me, is the most important: community. Being a part of such an incredible profession is in and of itself a great privilege and pleasure. But as development professionals, each of us knows what it feels like to be the tree falling in the woods that does not make a sound. By joining together with our colleagues to share our successes and our war stories, we become a dynamic community of facilitators and educators who are empowered to spread the word about the value of development and philanthropy to our CEOs, boards, and program staff – and to each other.

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